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One day we met three slave-workers. They were sitting on a hillside gnawing at roast goat's feet. Talking with them we discovered that they had to serve their master without wages. Must they do so all their lives? we asked. Perhaps not, but they were bound to work for him till certain debts and obligations had been paid off, and these seemed very complicated and vague.

The real slaves for life are the prisoners taken in war. Thus there are various forms of slavery in Guajira. It is, of course, an ancient phenomenon, of which the whites would seem to have taken advantage rather than to have combatted.

Slavery is a form of punishment. Formerly it was only conquered people and prisoners of war who were kept as slaves. This was usual among several Indian peoples, especially the Aruaks, to which group the Guajiro belong. With them slavery has been systematized.

Let us see how it is that someone becomes a slave. If an Indian has been insulted or killed, his clan demands compensation. If this is not paid, war breaks out between the two clans and those taken prisoner are treated as slaves without further ado. The Indians, however, never begin a war for the purpose of obtaining slaves. The slaves are reckoned as part of the damages, and they and the possessions of the conquered are divided among the victors according to certain principles. The eldest maternal uncle, mother, nephew, brothers and the leader of the fighting are entitled to damages; and if there is enough, the leader of the warriors will usually distribute some of the booty to his nearest relatives, mother, sisters, and maternal aunts. All the property of the enslaved prisoners-of-war passes into the hands of the victors: their pastures, water-holes, cattle, utensils, clothing, ornaments.

Slaves are the property of their masters, who can do with them as they see fit; sell them, give them away, kill them or use their labour and, if they are women, have intercourse with them as they may desire. The same goes for the men, if their master is a homosexual, as is not unusual in Guajira. The owner's unmarried sons or nephews also con-

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which occasioned her becoming a slave-worker, and then pay a bride-price to her family. The girl becomes free and, of course, her child is born free.

Real slaves are those taken in war. Nowadays they seldom take men or boys prisoner, but prefer to kill them instead. Otherwise there is always a risk that eventually they will try to avenge themselves. Women and girls are mostly spared and made slaves. Civil strife is common, and the Macuira Hills were no more peaceful than other areas, but the Indians were reluctant to harm the monks, though on occasion even they became involved.

One day a violent feud broke out between two clans. The chief of one clan himself led the fighting and had determined that the enemy was to be utterly exterminated. The battle raged quite close to the mission. To be anywhere near the Indians when they are fighting is dangerous, for those with rifles are seldom able to shoot and stray bullets fly everywhere. Poisoned arrows are also in the air, but they are better aimed and do not travel so far.

One day the monks heard that this chief had captured a couple of boys of the enemy clan and had ordered that they should be burned alive. The boys were reported to have been tied to a tree, round which a large fire had been lit, after which the chief's men had gone away, leaving the boys to their fate. Two of the monks set off at once for the tree. As they hurried along rain began to fall and they hoped that that might put the fire out and so save the boys' lives. When they arrived, however, one of the boys was already dead, having been suffocated by the smoke. The other was still alive and the monks carried him back with them, though they scarcely expected him to survive, for he was very badly burned. It seems pointless and cruel to kill little boys, but the Indians were afraid that, if they spared them, they would take vengeance later; thus, when they heard what had happened, they sent a message saying that the monks must hand the boy over.

The monks replied that the boy was dead. That was the only way of saving his life—if it could be saved. He died during the night, however, and was buried in the mission's

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garden. In the morning the Indians came and demanded the body. The monks refused, not wishing to lend themselves to violation of the dead, and said that they would only treat with the chief. He, however, was not in the vicinity. The Indians threatened to burn the mission station. Fortunately the chief arrived at this juncture, and told his braves that they must not use violence against the monks.

'Never to kill and just to rescue those condemned to death as you do, does not fit in with our laws,' he said to the monks. 'You Capuchins lack any sense of reality. But I shall do you no harm, since you never harm others.'

It sometimes happens that the victor instead of killing his male prisoners will sell them as slaves to the white men, preferably to places at some distance from the peninsula, such as the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curaçao, Zulia in Venezuela, or the Magdalena department of Colombia. The Indians deal in slaves among themselves; they also sell them to the white men and these, too, traffic in them among themselves.

Legally, a slave sold to a white person should become free, but in reality the owner of the *hacienda* treats him as a serf, branding his own mark on him, depriving him of his clan name and giving him his own. To sell a prisoner into slavery is not always to hear the last of him; for some have escaped from the Dutch islands, stowing away on boats, and on their return have exacted vengeance. It is not easy for hacienda slaves to escape. They are often hunted like animals.

There was a considerable sale of young girls to the whites, a scandalous traffic. In Indian territory this was mainly in the hands of quasi-chiefs, generally mestizos and other half-breeds with no right to the title, who cleverly saw how to exploit the Guajiro laws to earn a lot of money. The Guajiro customary law was never intended to apply to export.

The monks were the chief opponents of the slave-traffic. They received a special grant from the government of Colombia to enable them to purchase the freedom of slave children. The white men made no distinction between slave